

# The Snow King of 1899

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February of 1899 saw extremely cold weather spread across much of the United States east of the Rockies. Virtually unprecedented cold and snow in the second week of the month spread all the way to the Gulf coast and the eastern seaboard and was hailed under the headline of “Snow King” in many newspapers throughout those regions. At New Orleans the port froze over and ice floes emerged from the mouth of the Mississippi River and into the Gulf of Mexico on February 17<sup>th</sup>. Snow also fell in that city on several days, postponing the Mardi Gras parade and grinding all activity to a halt.



Snow in New Orleans, February 1899.

The extreme southeast U.S. states were not spared by the “Snow King”, particularly on February 12-13 when several areas reached their lowest temperatures on record. For example on the 13<sup>th</sup> Atlanta reported a high of only 7 degrees with a low of -9, an all-time record that still stands today. Even in Florida, snow was observed on February 12 as far south as Fort Myers with blizzard conditions reported on the west coast of the state north of Tampa due to ocean-effect snow. On the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Tallahassee reached a low of -2, making it the only subzero reading on record in Florida.



A snowball fight on the Florida state capitol steps, Tallahassee, February 13, 1899.